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OAJI (USA) = 0.350

SOI: [1.1/TAS](https://s-o-i.org/1.1/TAS) DOI: [10.15863/TAS](https://doi.org/10.15863/TAS)

International Scientific Journal Theoretical & Applied Science

p-ISSN: 2308-4944 (print) e-ISSN: 2409-0085 (online)

Year: 2025 Issue: 10 Volume: 150

Received: 01.10.2025

Accepted/Published: 30.10.2025 <https://T-Science.org>

Issue

Article



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ON THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SOCIAL STATUS OF FREE COSSACKS FOR THEIR INTERACTION WITH THE STATE STRUCTURES OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Abstract: In this article, the authors draw readers' attention to the fact that we have summarized the results of our research into the origins of the Cossacks, their social organization, and the relationship of the first free Cossack communities with the Russian state and the development of Siberia and the Far East in the context of the Cossacks' role in this great colonization movement to the East. For this purpose, we used analytical essays and materials from registered mass documentary sources and their chronological thematic registers of records, selected from the expenditure ledgers of the Treasury Prikaz.

Key words: Treasury Office, ethnosocial situation, post-Horde space, Great Horde, Russian state, history of the Cossacks, frontier zone, historiographic approaches, historical realities, neo-baptism, migration theory, Trojan War.

Language: English

Citation: Prokhorova, Yu.I., Blagorodov, A.A., Romanova, L.A., Korablina, S.Yu., & Volkova, G.Yu. (2025). On the importance of the social status of free Cossacks for their interaction with the state structures of the Russian Federation. *ISJ Theoretical & Applied Science*, 10 (150), 163-184.

Soi: <https://s-o-i.org/1.1/TAS-10-150-9> **Doi:**  <https://dx.doi.org/10.15863/TAS.2025.10.150.9>

Scopus ASCC: 2000.

Introduction

UDC 193.57:303.46.

Free Cossacks viewed their communities as

fraternities ("companies"), but these communities were built on the observance by their members of very specific, often very strict rules.

The military, political, and social form of

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Cossack unification was the "host." This type of social organization, of course, did not emerge immediately, but by the early 17th century, its existence was already documented in documents emanating from Moscow, thus reflecting the growing strength of the free Cossacks. What was this organization?

Its essence was absolutely correctly defined by S.I. Thorzhevsky: it was "a unique society, specially adapted for war, which served as the main source of existence for the members of this organization." According to the data available today on the functions and structure of the Cossack "host", the highest legislative power in it was exercised by the "circle" - an assembly of full-fledged Cossacks "of the entire river". Women and generally everyone who lived in the "host" territory (designated as the Cossack "court"), but was not a full-fledged Cossack, did not have the right to vote in the circle. Cossacks who had committed some offense ("foamy") were also not allowed to make decisions in the circle - until their guilt was forgiven by the "company". From distant towns, only representatives were usually sent to the "capital" to resolve particularly important issues; to resolve current affairs, the "host" had enough Cossacks present in the main town. In the 17th century, decisions in the circle were usually made not by counting votes, but by shouting, i.e. in accordance with the opinion of the overwhelming majority of those present. The circle met as needed. It was in charge of dividing up military spoils and the "sovereign's salary", legal proceedings, sent deputations, decided questions of war and peace, gave sanctions for the construction of new towns, examined petitions to the "troops" from various persons (including those who were not Cossacks), etc.

The executive power in the Cossack community belonged to the military ataman, who was elected by the circle, as a rule, for a year, but could be re-elected multiple times.

What this event looked like from the outside can be judged from its description by the Dutch mercenary officer Ludwig Fabricius, who closely interacted with the Razinists in Astrakhan. According to him, "a circle is when the Cossacks, at the command of the ataman, gather and form a circle, and in the center of the circle a head banner is planted, around which the ataman stands with his senior officers, to whom he communicates his plan so that they can convey it to the rank-and-file comrades and hear their opinions on it. If the rank-and-file comrades approve of the ataman's proposals, then they all unanimously shout: 'I love it, I love it...!'" or be stripped of power early, after which, legally, he is no longer any different from the rank-and-file Cossacks. At the circle, the ataman's vote was formally considered equal to the vote of an ordinary Cossack, and in case of disagreement with the opinion that prevailed at the circle, the ataman could himself prematurely renounce his title ("surrender the atamanship"), which, however, the

circle might not allow him to do, and the ataman was forced to submit to its will. For the duration of a military campaign, a campaign ataman was elected, who enjoyed unlimited power over its participants, and the "army" was divided into "stanitsas" - detachments of approximately 100 people led by their own atamans; the number of separately acting Cossack "stanitsas" was less defined; "stanitsas" were divided into "tens".

"Ataman" was also the name given to the leaders of other temporary associations of Cossacks – hunting bands, embassies to neighboring states, etc.

The second most important officials among the Cossacks after the atamans were the "esauls" elected in the circles (military and stanitsa, respectively). The atamans usually had two of them. The administration in individual towns was built on the same principle: their own circles gathered there, their own atamans and yesauls were elected. Refusal to carry out a general decision could lead to expulsion from the community, but more often condemned the disobedient to execution. Strict discipline was also maintained in the Cossack army during campaigns by a system of severe punishments.

The main role in the life of the Cossack communities, including in decision-making at the circle, was played by the "old Cossacks" (old-timers, contrasted in Moscow documents with the "new" Cossacks), from among whom the atamans were usually elected. The atamans themselves, according to some sources (1630s), could have a semblance of a personal squad - "atamanskaya stanitsa", and many Cossacks had young "comrades" or "churs" (from the Turkic "dzhura") under their command, i.e. students who not only learned military skills, but also performed the duties of servants to their masters- "teachers" - they herded horses, prepared hay, etc. (in the 18th century, such servants- "squires" were more often called "molodiki"). They could not participate in decision-making at the military circle, even if they remained in their status for a long time. Outsiders sometimes mistook the "churs" for simple serfs; some researchers also consider the "institution of Cossack apprenticeship" as one of the forms of "a kind of patriarchal slavery" - apparently because this "institution" was not always voluntary: it is known that during the Time of Troubles in the early 17th century, the Cossacks often took young peasants into "churs" by force. With all this, the relations between individual groups within the Cossack community can hardly be considered to be based on exploitation: they were more like the division of their members by gender, age and professional characteristics typical of archaic communities.

According to ethnographers' research, the social structure of free Cossack communities was characterized by stable traditions of collectivism and mutual assistance, "starting with the protection of their members from enemies and joint labor activities

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(company fishing, collective hunting, joint cattle herding, military Cossack "odnosumye", "skladnichestvo", various "pomochi" and "spryagachestvo") and ending with various manifestations of collectivism in everyday life...".

At the same time, there was also a property differentiation in the Cossack environment, and quite a significant one at that. It was even implied by the order of division of military spoils ("duvan"). The share of atamans and esauls was significantly greater than that of ordinary Cossacks. Old-timers, as a rule, were more prosperous ("homely"), enjoyed greater authority, and in the 17th century the main indicator of their wealth was usually the presence of a family. (Only in Zaporozhye it was the other way around: family Cossacks lived outside its "capital" - the Sich - and were not full members of the "host").

If we consider the entire population of the Cossack "courts," its legal heterogeneity becomes more apparent. The fact is that, in addition to full-fledged Cossacks ("old" and "new") and "chur," there were usually many individuals in the "host" territory who were not Cossacks. These were, first and foremost, residents of nearby "Russian" towns, who came to the Cossacks with all sorts of "goods" and represented a wide variety of categories—townspeople, nobles, peasants, and service personnel. They, in turn, were accompanied by rowers, barge haulers, "workers," and other servants, and the total number of such "guests" could reach hundreds at a time. Many of them, having sold their goods, remained with the Cossacks for a year or even several years, accompanying them on military campaigns, but did not become Cossacks and returned home. Residents of Samara usually visited the Yaik for this type of "trading and trade," while on the Don, residents of Voronezh, Kursk, Belgorod, Ryazhsk, Shatsk, Yelets, and other southern cities came. From there, in addition to the "trading people," tailors, shoemakers, blacksmiths, carpenters, and other artisans came to the Cossacks to earn money. Itinerant people hired themselves out to haymaking on Cossack farms, while priests performed various religious rites and services in chapels, and so on.

Examples of population heterogeneity Cossack regions, can be multiplied. Thus, the presence of Yasyrs and Yasyr women belonging to the Cossacks has been noted on the Don (this was also common for other "Cossack" rivers - in particular for the Yaik), and a completely special category of inhabitants of the region were the "Don Tatars", the first information about whom appears in the 1620s. The number of "Don Tatars" is difficult to determine from surviving sources (by the middle of the 17th century - apparently several hundred people), but researchers agree that this was the most numerous group of non-Slavic population of the Don region. They ended up there in the same way as its other "inhabitants" - they were "descendants" from the neighboring "hordes", forced

to leave them and take refuge on the Don due to various life circumstances. Most of them were Nogais. They lived under the Cossack "towns" in compact groups together with their families and preserved their customs, language and "Busurman" faith.

Main part

For Russians of the 17th century, faith, of course, was far more important than ethnicity. Therefore, overt xenophobia is not evident among the Cossacks of that time. However, it would be wrong to assume that they were completely indifferent to a person's nationality. Thus, documents emanating from the "Don Host" and the Terek Cossacks clearly distinguish between "Russian Cossacks" and "Zaporozhian Circassians" (Khokhlachi Cossacks). They not only state that "foreign migrants live in the Host," but also specify their ethnicity: in particular, they mention "Turks, Tatars, Greeks, and people from other lands"; even the "boldyri" (women born to Tatar women) born to Cossacks by Tatar women are counted separately in reports on the size of the "House."

Nevertheless, in legal terms, all Cossacks - both the "old" and the "young", and the atamans with the esauls - constituted a single mass, therefore, both in 1592 and 1638, in response to Moscow's request for the "best people" in the "army", the Don Cossacks declared that "they have the best people, whom they, having chosen the army, will send to the sovereign", and on the Don "they are all equal among themselves.

Attempts to classify the social structure of free Cossack communities have long been made. For the amateur Don "autonomists" and "separatists" of the early 20th century, this question was perfectly clear even without proof: until the 18th century, the Don Host was an "independent state," a "democratic republic." However, some serious figures in pre-revolutionary historiography, such as S.G. Svatikov and S.I. Tkhorzhevsky, also held a similar opinion.

In Cossack émigré literature, this idea is taken to the extreme. For example, the authors of the "Cossack Dictionary and Handbook," published in the United States, were convinced that a "Christian Cossack republic" ("an independent river state") had already emerged on the Don in the first half of the 16th century, and by the end of the century, "it had already grown into a powerful military and fully sovereign political society, ready to test its strength against the Turkish sultan and keeping his steppe vassals in fear." (Recall that, according to scholarly research, by the end of the 16th century, not even a unified military organization had emerged on the Don—this only occurred after the "Time of Troubles" of the early 17th century.)

Early Marxist historiography also contained its share of absurd, unfounded constructs. In the 1930s, Soviet researchers N. Yanchevsky and S. Tomsinsky, unlike the "Cossack" historians, effectively denied

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any independence to the Don Host of the 16th and 17th centuries, but went much further in modernizing its social structure, albeit from different perspectives. Yanchevsky asserted that the Don Cossacks "constantly remained an instrument of merchant capital, being a mercenary army in the literal sense of the word," while Tomsinsky, reproaching his colleague for underestimating the social differentiation of the Cossacks, believed that they "were not homogeneous in their class composition," that the "riding Cossacks" should be viewed as "fugitive peasantry and an urban petty-bourgeois group," and that the "Cossack ideal" was "bourgeois-democratic equality."

Later, in Soviet historiography, more balanced judgments prevailed in characterizing the social structure of the Cossacks, although not always supported by a convincing system of evidence. Thus, in the 1960s and 1970s, V.A. Golobutsky and I.G. Rozner, considering "the very emergence of free Cossacks in the late 15th – early 16th centuries" as "a sign... of the beginning of the disintegration of the feudal-serf system," saw in the Cossack communities "anti-feudal state formations," "peculiar (albeit undeveloped) democratic 'republican' organizations." However, this point of view was not supported by the majority of researchers, who, incidentally, themselves did not pay due attention to the issue of the social nature of the Cossack communities for a long time.

But it became more acute by the beginning of the 1990s. Ideologists and activists of the Cossack revival, following the emigrants - "Cossacks" of the 1920-1930s, began to bluntly call the Don, Yaik or Zaporozhian troops "independent states", and not just any, but the most democratic in the 16th-17th centuries, far ahead of their time. Cossack democracy was declared by some journalists and publicists to be the "embryo of bourgeois democracy", the forerunner of modern democracy and a model to follow.

Similar opinions can now be found among seemingly serious scientists, and their works are enthusiastically greeted by the "Cossack community" for this reason. Thus, some of our Ukrainian colleagues (M. Braichevsky and others) called it a democratic republic. According to them, "the Zaporizhian Cossacks brought to life progressive ideas of social organization", were the bearers of "new bourgeois tendencies", and were brought to life by them. V.A. Golobutsky, summing up his study of Ukrainian history, also came to the conclusion that Zaporizhia was a "free island where progressive forms of socio-economic relations prevailed".

In Russia, such views are now not uncommon in the scientific community. They are shared to varying degrees by candidates of legal sciences A.V. Falaleev and O.I. Kopaneva, candidate of political sciences A.E. Mokhov, sociologist M.G. Artamonova, historians A.G. Shkvarov and I.Yu. Erokhin, and some other researchers.

They generally consider the strongest argument in support of their point of view to be the fact that Moscow conducted its dealings with the Free Cossacks through the Ambassadorial Prikaz, and therefore recognized them as independent and fully-fledged states. But this argument is difficult to accept. History knows of many cases in which major world powers, through their diplomatic channels, established relations with ethno-territorial entities that were at the stage of a "classical" tribal, i.e., pre-state, system: recall Rome's treaties with barbarian tribes or the agreements between England and France and the Indians in the 17th-19th centuries. As for the Ambassadorial Prikaz, it managed contacts not only with sovereign political entities but also with regions and population categories that could in no way be classified as "equal subjects"—for example, with the southern Russian districts at the beginning of their development or with the settlements of "service Tatars." His attention to such "subjects" was determined not by their status, but by their connection with the country's foreign policy.

Scholars traditionally consider the emergence of taxation and a public authority independent of the general population, with specialized administrative apparatus and, in particular, a judicial system based not on archaic norms of "common law" but on written legislation, to be important criteria for a developed state. In Cossack communities, these characteristics were either absent or in their infancy.

This is clear to many modern researchers, including those from abroad. For example, the Canadian historian of Korean descent, JuYup Lee, does not consider it possible to view early Cossack communities even as pre-state ones: "The institution of Cossacks and the state should be considered not as successive stages of social evolution, but as alternative models."

Apparently, based on similar approaches to the problem, many researchers, when characterizing the social structure of the Free Cossacks, prefer to speak not of statehood, but of quasi-statehood. True, they sometimes disagree on its definition, using other, similar concepts and terms (proto-statehood, pre-statehood, para-political potestary communities, etc.), but the essence of their general reasoning, despite all the caveats and differences in interpretation, remains quite close: the social organization of the Free Cossacks, over the course of its development, only approached the state form, but never achieved it. This concept, however, lacks clarity in defining the author's positions. Meanwhile, a careful analysis of Cossack customs allows us to draw quite specific conclusions regarding their social nature: namely, the social structure of the free Cossacks most closely resembles the social institutions of that stage of human development commonly referred to as the period of military democracy. The term "military democracy" itself was introduced into scholarly circulation in 1877

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by the American historian and ethnographer L. Morgan, whose theories are better known in our country through their interpretation by F. Engels. The main characteristics of the stage of social development designated by this term consisted of the strong power of military leaders while maintaining a strong sense of "primitive collectivism" within society. This period is sometimes also referred to as the era of "primitive democracy."

When examining early Cossack communities from this perspective, one cannot help but notice that analogies with the period of military democracy emerge when analyzing both the social structure and the very way of life of the free Cossacks. Atamans, for example, are easily recognizable as military leaders, while "circles" are popular assemblies. The election of leaders, equality in rights and responsibilities, personal freedom and universal armament of community members, the crucial place and significance of military campaigns in life, the equal distribution of spoils among community members (through "duvan")—these and other features of the Cossack way of life fit well within the framework of the stage of development known as the period of military democracy, although, of course, this does not make this way of life entirely adequate to it. Is it not more logical, therefore, to assume that Cossack communities in the 16th and 17th centuries were not the embodiment of future social relations, but rather an echo of the past, a peculiar vestige of pre-feudal times? In any case, in terms of their way of life and social structure, the free Cossacks of the period under consideration are much closer to the last stage of pre-class society than to those that followed it...

This point of view was formulated back in 1985 and has since been repeatedly refined and further substantiated. Many researchers now share it to varying degrees, including A.L. Stanislavsky and others.

But there are also many opponents. Among them is the renowned specialist in Cossack history, N.A. Mininkov. He rejects the idea that the social structure of the free Cossacks was close to the institutions of military democracy in principle and, like some pre-revolutionary historians (such as F.A. Shcherbina), sees the origins of Cossack democracy in the veche system of Novgorod, which, after its abolition by Ivan III, was transferred from the North to the South—to the Cossack rivers.

A number of other researchers hold similar views: I.L. Omelchenko and others also see analogies to the Cossack order, primarily in the veche system of Ancient Rus', and, moreover, do not recognize the very concept of "military democracy", because they believe that science has long since abandoned it.

The counterarguments of A. V. Falalev and A. N. Larionov are quite original. They believe that a pre-state society must necessarily be tribal, and since the Cossack "troops" were not tribal unions, then there

can be no talk of a military-democratic, pre-state character of their social organization. This is an extremely simplified interpretation of the essence of the problem by these researchers. The concept they criticize does not assume a complete identification of the social organization of Cossack communities and tribal associations that are at the stage of "classical" military democracy, but only speaks of the proximity of the social structure of the free Cossacks to it to a greater extent than to subsequent stages of social development.

Other arguments of our opponents are also not very convincing. The social structure of the "free" Novgorod or Pskov of the 15th century with their deep social stratification (boyar-merchant clans on one side and ordinary townspeople on the other, with the real power in the city not of the "people", but of the boyar, merchant and church oligarchy) did not correspond in any way to the internal structure of the Cossack communities based on social equality; and besides, it is unclear how the urban structure of Kievan Rus could have become the most optimal for communities that had lived for centuries in conditions that were completely unsuitable for organizing urban life...

However, under one condition this point of view could be considered not without grounds: if we agree with the concept of I. Ya. Froyanov, according to which ancient Russian society was at the stage of transition from a primitive communal system to an early feudal one. However, our opponents are in no hurry to do this - with the exception of perhaps A. Yu. Dvornichenko. But his arguments are not entirely flawless. Thus, he clearly rushed with his assertion about science's rejection of the concept of "military democracy".

This term was and is widely used in relatively recently published historical works when defining the social structure of a number of Siberian peoples of the 14th–16th centuries, and is found in generalizing works on Russian history. Incidentally, it is used by A. Yu. Dvornichenko himself — when characterizing the level of socio-political development of the East Slavic tribes (proving that no Old Russian state actually existed).

The concept of "military democracy" has not been abandoned by "world science". In any case, the Swiss-Austrian historian Andreas Kappeler constantly uses it, and, by the way, also to characterize the socio-political structure of the free Cossacks, the forms of unification of which he calls "pre-state communities". And Professor of the University of Bonn Dietmar Dahlmann, explaining the essence of the concept of "Cossack", writes: "Initially, the Cossacks had an internal structure in accordance with the principles of military democracy, which was finally lost during the 18th century."

However, no matter what analogies we draw with respect to Cossack communities—both with the social institutions of the period of military democracy

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and with the veche order of Ancient Rus—we cannot escape the fact that both were deeply archaic for the 16th–17th centuries.

The archaic nature of the free Cossacks' social organization was already clear to prominent pre-revolutionary historians such as G.F. Miller and others. "Be that as it may," noted A.L. Stanislavsky, "the 'free' Cossacks of the Don, Volga, Yaik, and Terek of the early 17th century were, in their social development, much more archaic than the social structure of the Russian state of the same time." V.V. Glushchenko calls the "Cossack freemen" "islands of state-political archaism." And according to I.G. Yakovenko, "the Cossacks... represent one example of the ideological and everyday reinforcement of archaism."

In this regard, the question naturally arises: how could such social structures be preserved for so long among much more developed communities?

Even according to proponents of the concept of the late formation of statehood in Rus', the Eastern Slavs passed the stage of military democracy at least 500–600 years before the emergence of free Cossack communities. However, we should hardly attempt to "bridge the gap" from the 8th–11th centuries to the 15th–16th centuries by identifying a chain of events and phenomena that "preserved" the social structure of a certain portion of the Old Russian population or by proving the genetic connection of individual groups with the Free Cossacks. The social structure of the Free Cossacks was influenced by the social structures of neighboring nomadic peoples. This point of view is present in one way or another in the works of many researchers today, but, of course, it does not completely resolve the issue. It is undeniable that the social organization of the Free Cossacks was perfectly adapted to the extreme conditions of their lives and, therefore, could well have developed spontaneously. Left largely to their own devices, acting at their own risk in a generally hostile environment and constant military danger, free Cossack communities would not have lasted long without personal freedom, social equality and universal armament of their members, without broad democracy in the resolution of common affairs and, at the same time, discipline and strict unity of command during military operations.

Moreover, it is known that any sufficiently complex system—from biological to social—when it encounters crisis or dead-end situations (or those that appear to be such) during its development, has a tendency to reverse course, striving to return to its original, pre-crisis state. "The strengthening of the 'instinct of the past' in crisis conditions is obviously a universal phenomenon," M.A. Ryblova aptly observed.

Under certain circumstances, as V.V. Gribovsky also believes, "ancient institutions" are capable of "exploding hierarchies of a later order, returning social structures to their original state." He cites the

uprisings of the 17th and early 18th centuries as examples of such "returns." However, it would be logical to allow for the possibility of the regeneration of ancient social structures in Cossack communities during other—perhaps outwardly calmer, but no less difficult—times.

The idea that the Cossack regions of the 16th and 17th centuries recreated social relations that were significantly earlier than those in the mainland is evident in modern historiography. An example is M.A. Ryblova's doctoral dissertation, which states, in particular:

"The potestary structure of the Don Cossack communities was built on archaic principles and mechanisms based on customary law. The essence of the internal functional conflict that formed the basis of the cultural model emerging in the Wild Field was the process of reproducing archaism in the face of extreme conditions."

There have been situations in our history when the entire country was on the verge of sliding back to the most archaic forms of social organization. This occurred during the First Russian Time of Troubles in the early 17th century. Then, under conditions of paralysis of state power, as A.L. Stanislavsky, I.O. Tyumentsev, and several other historians have convincingly demonstrated, not only the "Field" but also the central regions of the country began to transform into a zone for the formation of free Cossacks.

During this "Time of Troubles," self-government by civilians also began to take on Cossack forms. As M.B. Bulgakov noted, "'petty' townspeople self-organized to protect their interests." As an example, he cites material from S.B. Veselovsky's work, which states that in 1615, the residents of Ustyuzhna Zheleznopolskaya "introduced a Cossack lifestyle, converted all the poor people to the faith, marked themselves with an icon, and conspired not to listen to the zemstvo kissers."

The next emergence of the free Cossacks onto the broad historical stage in Russia was associated with the uprising led by Sergei Razin, during which Cossack self-government was introduced in the territories captured by the rebels. This, of course, did not yet make the tradesmen or peasants who lived there, or even those who joined the uprising, Cossacks, even if they called themselves so "for the sake of charm," without changing their way of life or occupation. However, it nevertheless testified to the same slide of a significant portion of the country's population back toward the "old," pre-state forms of governance that embodied the Cossack order.

The "Cossackization" of the peasant and tradesmen population also occurred during K. Bulavin's rebellion. But even during smaller-scale social conflicts in various regions of Russia, Cossack forms of self-government often emerged among non-Cossack communities, often without the direct

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influence of free Cossacks. This occurred especially frequently in the 17th century, in the outskirts, and especially in Siberia.

The speed and ease with which, during times of crisis, the population in Russia self-organized according to the principles of "Cossack democracy" demonstrates that the social structure of the Free Cossacks should not be considered something far removed from the general Russian system, much less opposed to it. Thanks primarily to the works of V.A. Alexandrov and N.N. Pokrovsky, published at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s, we know that, up until the early 18th century, Russia had very strong traditions of communal, "secular" self-government, which even the central administration was forced to reckon with, and the slightest weakening of state authority revived and strengthened these traditions. And, according to most researchers who have studied these topics, their roots go back to pre-state times.

In this regard, it would be quite logical to conclude that the Russian community ("mir") and the free Cossack communities of the 16th–17th centuries were closely related in stage. It explains a lot in Russian history.

According to V.D. Nazarov, expressed as early as 1972, the internal organization of Cossack regions "was built on a unique interpretation of peasant commune traditions." "As for Cossack forms of self-government, they are almost formally indistinguishable from the structure of peasant communities," states a work by E.I. Indova, A.A. Preobrazhensky, and Yu.A. Tikhonov, published in 1974. L.B. Zasedateleva believes that "the Cossack kuren, initially composed of members of a multi-tribal Cossack troop, developed from the very beginning as a rural neighborhood community."

L.V. Danilova also saw no fundamental differences between the peasant commune and the Cossack communities of the 16th and 17th centuries. She classified the latter as "a system of rural communities that still retained their own armed forces..." According to L.V. Danilova, "such communities were typically maintained on the periphery of the feudal world. Here, they could be recreated from diverse elements who found themselves outside the confines of their former estates. The classic example of such communities is the organization of the Cossacks."

Indeed, there is every reason to believe that there is nothing fundamentally different in the Cossack communities of the 16th–17th centuries from the rural "world" of the same time, but at the same time, the Cossack community on the Don, Yaik, or Terek looks more archaic, representing, figuratively speaking, "yesterday" (or perhaps even "the day before yesterday") of the Russian peasant community, which is entirely understandable given the extreme conditions in which the communities of free Cossacks found themselves in the 16th–17th centuries.

The high adaptability of the Russian "mir" has already been noted by researchers. L.V. Milov noted the "phenomenal adaptability" of the rural community "to various social conditions." "The community was a very flexible organism, capable of changing its external forms and adapting to various conditions," writes S.V. Lurye, noting that "in all cases, the internal essence of the community remained unchanged—it was a self-governing 'mir.'" In ancient times, the 'mir' occupied the place of the state, Lurye believes, but even with the growth of civilization, the 'mir' remained a self-sufficient entity in the eyes of the people and enjoyed supreme authority. Until recently, the "mir" possessed certain attributes of statehood: self-government according to established procedures, a court according to "customary law," punitive functions (including exile by decision of the assembly), the maintenance of social norms and morality, and a whole range of administrative and cultural functions. The "mir" was asked for intercession; petitions were addressed to it. The "mir" collected taxes and paid them to the state authorities as tribute. In all external contacts (with the state or with other similar "mirs"), it acted as a unified whole and protected each of its members from outside encroachment. It even reached the point that, as early as the early 19th century, during the Patriotic War of 1812, the "mir" assumed defensive functions.

N.I. Dorokhov expresses a similar opinion. "For many centuries, the population lived in communities," he writes. "Here, over the centuries, its own norms of behavior and ideals were developed. Russia's historical fate gradually strengthened the value of community ("peace") in the people's consciousness. After all, it was the community that could protect people. They saw in it the embodiment of the dream of justice and equality."

The social structure of free Cossack communities also corresponded to the masses' notions of a "proper" life, and the intergenerational proximity of "secular" and Cossack forms of social organization in the 16th and 17th centuries created fertile ground for the adoption and re-creation of Cossack customs in the territory of "native" Russia in times of crisis, when the lower classes were forced (or were willing) to take up arms to defend their interests. And since social upheaval was a permanent feature of Russia, the "spirit of free Cossackism" remained ingrained in the popular consciousness throughout many centuries of Russian history. However, given the above, it would be more accurate to speak not so much of a Cossack spirit as of a communal spirit, which permeated the fundamental social structures of Russia and was particularly noticeable where state authority was weak.

In connection with the topic of our research, it is appropriate to recall an old adage, well-recognized by many philosophers and historians, formulated by A. de Tocqueville as follows: "The world that is

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emerging is still half buried in the debris of the world that is dying..." In Soviet historiography, this idea was reflected in the thesis of the "multi-structured economy." Contemporary researchers also pay attention to this factor. For example, N.I. Dorokhov sees "the picture of Russia's stage-by-stage development" as "blurred." In his opinion, "modernity was complicated by the vague remnants of the past. Hence the pronounced multi-structured nature of society. The roots of many Russian conflicts lie in the contradictory coexistence of phenomena belonging to different eras."

It would be appropriate in this regard to recall the following statement by the famous Soviet historian A.L. Shapiro:

"No Soviet historian doubts that the emergence of class society among all Slavic peoples, as among all peoples, was preceded by the era of primitive communal society. However, disagreements arise when it comes to the degree of viability of the institutions of the primitive communal system, the extent to which they were preserved in Kievan Rus', during the period of feudal fragmentation, and in the centralized Russian state."

The institution of Cossackism in the 16th and 17th centuries represented one of the most visible and powerful elements of pre-state sociality. However, Cossack communities were living organisms, developing according to their own laws, maintaining the ability to adapt to changing foreign and domestic political conditions and undergoing significant internal evolution. This evolution proceeded in one direction, manifesting itself in increasing social differentiation within Cossack communities, the increasing complexity of their internal organization (in some, even reaching the pre-state level), and their integration into the system of more complex socio-political structures developing in the center of the country.

O.V. Gubenko is right when he writes that "for centuries, the communal society (Cossack, Central Russian, North Caucasian, and other ethnic groups), built in matters of internal organization on the principle of the primacy of customary law, was not a relic fossil, and its evolution consistently occurred under the influence of internal processes, which are often a reflection of the socio-economic and political realities of a particular period of national history."

Since the Cossack regions were never economically self-sufficient, the fundamental factors in their further evolution, as V.D. Nazarov rightly noted, ultimately depended on the historical destinies of neighboring states, which predetermined "the inevitability of a repetition... of the cycle of the emergence and strengthening of the feudal social structure in the Cossack regions." As the Cossacks' living conditions changed and their dependence on Moscow grew, the prevailing order in the center of the country increasingly influenced their way of life and

social structure. The Cossack regions were gradually but steadily drawn into the system of co-operation prevailing in the surrounding countries. Believing that the free Cossack bands of the 16th and 17th centuries... This is mainly the result of the self-organization of marginal, declassed elements (people who, for one reason or another, fell out of the social structure established in Russian society at that time), but we cannot ignore another important question for understanding the social nature of the Cossacks - the extent to which it is acceptable to put on the same level the criminal and Cossack communities of Russia in the 16th-17th centuries.

Up to a certain point, this is entirely plausible. In the early stages of their existence, Cossack (or, if you prefer, proto-Cossack) gangs were virtually indistinguishable from bandit gangs—not only in Russian but also in Mongol-Tatar circles, a fact that has long been convincingly confirmed by historians. Overall, the evolution of free Cossack communities is also clear. As modern researchers write, what occurred was "the transformation of a band of outcast bandits into militant organizations with a well-established life support system and a system of values."

"The Cossacks have gone through a difficult path from free bandits to special units of the Russian regular cavalry, from a community of barbarian frontiersmen (residents of the borderlands of civilized states) to a special military-service class of Russian society." However, the characteristics of the Cossack communities of the "intermediate" period - from the first bands to the transformation into an estate of the Russian Empire - and in particular the 17th century, are not so clear-cut.

In pre-revolutionary literature, the Cossacks of this period were often viewed as simple bandits. Such views were typical, above all, of a number of representatives of Russian (noble) historiography in the first half of the 19th century, who considered the Cossacks "a horde of vagabonds, living by robbery and plunder." However, such views did not receive full support from their colleagues. Thus, N.I. Kostomarov, objecting to historians who were unwilling to "see in the Cossacks anything other than a horde of bandits," noted: "...Cossackism was a new phase of historical life, and, according to the invariable law of the emergence, rise, and decline of human societies, it was bound to have its own period of barbarism, a period of chaos, and a period of stability."

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, historians' characterizations of the Cossacks were generally even less clear-cut. For example, S.F. Platonov's account of the free Cossacks of the 16th and 17th centuries was as follows: "The Cossack masses, in their chaotic unrest, easily shifted from robbery to service to the state, from fighting the infidels to committing violence against their fellow

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Cossacks." At the same time, the works of Don historians (such as Kh.I. Popov and P.P. Sakharov), who sought to "ennoble" their ancestors, consistently emphasized the idea that their raids on the "infidels" were merely a "just rebuff" to enemy encroachments on Cossack lands.

For a long time, Soviet historiography embraced a simplified, idealized approach to the Cossacks of the 17th and 18th centuries, as the "vanguard in the class struggle of the working people" in feudal Russia. "It is profoundly wrong to view Cossack detachments as some kind of bandit gangs living by plunder," wrote, for example, K. Ya. Nayakshin. "The Cossacks formed fishing cooperatives, fished, and hunted, which was their main source of livelihood." According to this historian (unsupported, like the previous statement, by factual material), "coming from the oppressed peasantry, the Cossacks considered it shameful to rob the poor or cause them any harm, but they were always ready to wage war against boyars, voivodes, and merchants, and they did not spare the Nogais and Tatars, viewing them as enemies of the Russian people."

Another historian of the Volga region, V.A. Osipov, considered the Cossack attacks on the tsar's, merchant, and monastic caravans that took place in this region not to be acts of robbery, but rather "one of the most striking manifestations of the acute class struggle against oppressors and persecutors."

Against the backdrop of such conclusions, I.S. Shepelev's admission that "there was a group within the ranks of the Cossacks that, under the guise of 'freedom,' robbed and ruined indiscriminately both landowners and peasants, serving whoever paid the most" seemed like a step forward.

After A.L. Stanislavsky's 1990 monograph on the Cossack movement during the Time of Troubles of the early 17th century, it became clear that the issue here was not a single "group," but rather a vast mass of free Cossacks who had spread across Rus'. This major study, based on previously unknown archival materials, contains documentary evidence of the Cossack terror that, during the Time of Troubles, fell precisely on the "common people," and, above all, the peasant population. A.L. Stanislavsky also provides a general characterization of the "banditry" of the free Cossacks. "There was also a certain connection between the banditry that was widespread in Russia in the late 16th and early 17th centuries and the actions of the free Cossacks," he writes, namely:

firstly, going to the Cossacks and to the robbers was for the peasants and serfs the realization of their dream of "freedom";

Secondly, the Cossacks, due to their uncertain social status and the lack of reliable sources of income, often resorted to outright robbery – Cossacks and robbers were sometimes indistinguishable to contemporaries.

And finally, some bandit detachments joined the

Cossacks ("appeared to be") at the beginning of the 17th century with all the greater ease, since the organization of bandit and Cossack detachments had much in common."

This undoubtedly accurate observation should, however, be extended to periods later than the early 17th century. Let's recall how many years in Russia the leader of not only a Cossack detachment, but also a band of robbers, was called nothing less than "ataman." The semantics of this word are also elementary, and they clearly line up in a time series:

"ataman" (from the Turkic "ata" - father), "father" (Russian synonym) and, finally, "godfather" (modern "thieves' argot").

The Cossacks emerged from their "cradle of banditry" with many lingering "birthmarks." The actions of the Cossack freebooters during the naval expeditions "for zipuns" are characterized by historians in various ways. N.I. Pavlenko, for example, is inclined to consider these actions simply robbery. But even those who, like V.N. Korolev, believe that the Cossacks in this case were motivated by "hatred of the enemy, vengeance for their desecrated brothers, the desire to free them from captivity," and military-strategic considerations—even they cannot deny the more prosaic goals of Cossack expeditions—rich booty and its "duvan." The Cossacks, understandably, did not stand on ceremony with the "infidels" during military campaigns, yet how many outright acts of robbery did they commit against their fellow tribesmen and co-religionists! Relapses of such behavior were not uncommon even among those Cossacks for whom the main source of income was, or had long been, "state service."

Confronted with such facts, the authors of the two-volume work "Cossack Don" (P.N. Lukichev, A.P. Skorik, R.G. Tikidzhyan, V.P. Trut), which has already been mentioned more than once in our work, despite their desire to present the history of the Cossacks in an "ennobled" form and calling the Don Cossacks of the 16th–17th centuries "free steppe knights," nevertheless noted that "the Cossacks, who were not engaged in agriculture until the 18th century, lived, providing for themselves to a significant extent through war and robbery," and led, "undoubtedly, a robber lifestyle."

In the monograph by the Rostov historian N.A. Mininkov, "Don Cossacks in the Late Middle Ages," which has also been mentioned several times, robbery is already mentioned as the main source of existence for the Cossacks. Another Rostov researcher, E.I. Dulimov, compares the Cossacks' way of life with filibusters. In 1998, the Moscow historian A.I. Izyumov, studying the Ural Cossack community, also came to the conclusion that "for a long time it lived by a peculiar trade — robberies, raids on neighbors or merchants traveling along the Ural River and the Caspian Sea." And the Yekaterinburg historian and ethnologist A.V. Golovnev characterizes the life of the

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free Cossacks as follows: "The Cossack gangs, having gone through the robber school of the Crimean and Nogai Hordes, used the Horde's methods of raids and robberies. They turned these tactics against the hordes themselves, tracking down and plundering their camps and caravans. Their main source of income was robbery, known as "Cossack bread."

At the same time, it is impossible not to notice that many real aspects of the life of the free Cossacks do not fit with the image of a primitive robber-robber. Thus, the Don Cossacks during their campaigns for "zipuns" to the Crimean and Turkish shores often freed the "captives" from captivity, fed them with their "provisions" and even supplied them with everything they needed for the road if they did not want to stay on the Don, and such assistance was provided not only to Russians, but to all Christians in general. (True, they could have acted differently with the female "captives": there is information that in some cases the Cossacks escorted women to their homeland, and in others they kept them and "gave them away in marriage to the towns"). Also noteworthy is the refusal of the Cossacks during the Azov "siege" to take money from the Turks for a "beaten corpse": the Cossacks allowed the bodies of fallen enemies to be removed from the battlefield free of charge. And the correspondence with the Moscow government regarding the capture of Azov by the Cossacks shows that they were not at all alien to the concepts of military honor and glory, which are incompatible with the mentality of criminals. The same is evidenced by the Cossacks' attitude to banners as indispensable attributes of camp life, and to the regalia received as an award as military relics, as well as another important circumstance: the Cossacks really sincerely considered themselves avengers for the "plundering" and "torture" of Orthodox Christians by the "infidels".

The social aspect should not be overlooked either. Cases where "thieving Cossacks" on the Volga, killing service people on captured ships, released "workers" and couriers with royal letters are considered almost textbook cases.

L.V. Milov also drew attention to the objective circumstances that pushed the Cossacks onto the path of robbery and plunder. "...Cossack trades could not become the basis of the Cossacks' productive activity," he wrote, "they were only an auxiliary means of subsistence." Hence the "periodically arising (not from a good life!) need of the Cossacks either for wars or for military robberies. This was a fact of the real history of the Cossacks both on the Don and on the Dnieper."

But it wasn't just the Cossacks. Among the Cossacks' foreign neighbors—the Turks and Tatars—even high-ranking officials (for example, Crimean and Nogai ambassadors en route to their homeland) weren't above engaging in banal robbery. Therefore, when discussing Cossack robberies and plunder, we cannot ignore the ethical concepts and psychological

attitudes that prevailed in military circles at any given time. These attitudes, not only in the 16th and 17th centuries but also much later, right up to modern times, despite official prohibitions, fully tolerated (for self-sufficiency, for example) the plunder of civilians not only in enemy territory but also in one's own country, a fact that has been repeatedly noted by both pre-revolutionary and modern researchers.

Modern Western historians, characterizing the social nature of Cossack and pirate communities, define it as "social banditry," understanding it as a violation of the law that is not considered a crime by public opinion. Developing this idea, A.G. Shkvarov emphasizes that the Cossacks themselves, in fact, "never considered their actions... against those with whom they had to fight as crimes... for a crime is a socially dangerous act, defined by the law of the society in which it is adopted, and subject to punishment." The Cossacks went to war "either by decree of their highest authority—the circle, i.e., in accordance with their own law, and later... by the Imperial decree, i.e., again, in accordance with the law." The verdict of the Boyar Duma of July 10, 1619, regarding the thefts and robberies committed during the prince's campaign, is noteworthy in this regard.

Vladislav's attack on Moscow in 1617–1618. Their investigation was not initiated with the following explanation: "because it was a war at that time, not a robbery."

It's unlikely, however, that the Cossacks' "robbery" actions can be understood and explained by delving into the depths of jurisprudence. It's essential to consider, first and foremost, the mentality of each era. "The Cossacks should not be judged too harshly," writes A.L. Stanislavsky, "for the behavior of soldiers in Europe during that era was no better." Indeed, the line separating a robber from a warrior in the Middle Ages was often quite vague. But the distinction between a robber and a warrior (soldier) in this case is determined by the purpose of the actions they undertake. For a band of robbers, robbery is their primary occupation, while for soldiers (unless, of course, they have become a gang of brigands) it is a secondary one.

Moreover, it should be taken into account that raids accompanied by robberies were often undertaken by the Cossacks as a response to similar actions by their nomadic neighbors: the Cossacks lived in conditions of constant military danger, were drawn into a permanent steppe war of "all against all," and the laws of that war were the same everywhere.

At the same time, it's impossible not to see that as Cossack communities evolved toward consolidation and greater organization, "robber" habits and mores were gradually eliminated, while "military" ones intensified. According to the authors of the collective monograph "The Cossack Don: Essays on History," the emerging socio-political model among the Cossacks "ensured the necessary

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organization and discipline, guaranteed self-purification from the 'vicious' element that had not yet eliminated its marginal-criminal habits and mentality, fostered a new 'brotherhood in spirit,' and strengthened the military organization of the Cossacks."

Cossack morals also softened as the Don, Yaik, and Terek-Grebensk hosts increasingly came under the influence of the Russian state and the Russian Orthodox Church. Although this process was rather long and uneven, it had a clear direction toward transforming the free Cossacks into a service class of the "metropolis."

This was one of the fundamental differences. The situation and fate of free Cossack communities differed from socially homogeneous communities in other countries, and it is precisely in this that some historians see the "true phenomenality of the Cossacks." This, according to A.I. Kozlov, lies in the fact that after all communities related to the Cossacks in social essence effectively ceased to exist, "the Cossacks continued to live, overcoming all the thorns in their path."

Indeed, compared, for example, to the "pirate republics" of the Caribbean, which disappeared by the 18th century, free Cossack communities persisted longer, undergoing a natural evolution, and were more stable. Most importantly, they had much closer, more constant, and more varied ties with neighboring states—primarily with the "metropolis," which was interested in preserving the Cossacks (as a kind of shield on its borders and a cheap but effective armed force) and steadily drawing them into its orbit of influence. It was precisely as a result of the combination of external influence and internal evolution that the free Cossacks ultimately emerged as one of Russia's privileged classes socially and as ethnographic (sub-ethnic) groups of the state-forming people ethnically.

Understanding the nature of the relationship between the Don, Yaik, and Terek-Greben "hosts" and the Russian state is impossible without clarifying the social status of the free Cossacks in Russian society in the 16th and 17th centuries. In literature, this status is most often defined as class-based, but the issue is not as simple as some historians imagine. If estates are traditionally understood as social groups possessing rights and obligations defined by law (or custom) and passed on by inheritance, then the inevitable conclusion is that the free Cossacks could not, in fact, have constituted an estate within the Muscovite state until the end of the 17th century, as they were then outside its jurisdiction.

And indeed. In Moscow in the 17th century, relations with the free Cossacks were primarily handled by the Ambassadorial Prikaz, and, as Grigory Kotoshikhin, who had previously served there as a clerk, recalled in 1666, when Cossack delegations arrived in Moscow, "they were treated with the same

honor as distinguished foreigners." In turn, the Tsar's ambassadors, upon arriving in the Cossack circle, in accordance with the diplomatic ceremonial accepted at the time, inquired about the health of the "troops." (The latter, however, was not practiced for long, and not only with regard to the free Cossacks: it is known, for example, that Boris Godunov, upon ascending the throne, instructed the messengers sent to Voronezh to inquire about the health of the local nobles, city Cossacks, and streltsy—in other words, the entire urban "world").

Moreover, according to the same Kotoshikhin, free Cossacks enjoyed a certain immunity from prosecution and were tried "in all matters at their own discretion, not by royal decree. And if they were to execute anyone for theft or other crimes, or for steadfast service, they would sit them down in the square or field and shoot them themselves with bows or pistols. Likewise, if anyone were in Moscow or in regiments who stole anything, there would be no royal punishment or execution, but they would carry out the crimes among themselves..." But perhaps the most complete manifestation of the free Cossacks' legal immunity was their immunity from prosecution by the Moscow authorities for crimes committed before acquiring Cossack status. As Kotoshikhin wrote, criminals, "having been on the Don for even one week or month, would be lucky enough to return to Moscow with something, and before they reach them, no one will have any problems with anything, no matter what they steal, because the Don frees them from all troubles."

The principle of "no extradition from the Don!" was immutable and defining in the relationship between Moscow and the free Cossacks until the early 18th century, and applied, of course, not only to the Don Host. It was well known in Rus' and could not fail to catch the eye of foreign observers. The English diplomat Charles Whitworth (1675–1725), who believed that "Cossack rule is a form of military democracy," wrote: "The Cossacks enjoy very great privileges, one of the most significant of which was that every peasant or slave who found himself in their country received his freedom and could not be claimed by his master or the Muscovite government."

Moreover, free Cossacks, at least until the mid-17th century, maintained the voluntary nature of their service to the "great sovereign," believing themselves entitled to freely "depart" from it. For example, in the Don region, until 1671, under various (usually far-fetched) pretexts, they categorically refused to take the official oath of allegiance to the Russian Tsar. Most importantly, in the main code of laws of the Muscovite state—the Cathedral Code of 1649—all articles "on Cossacks" refer only to representatives of the service, "urban" Cossacks, and there is not a single article about free Cossacks.

According to political scientist A.E. Mokhov, "it

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was implied that the Code of 1649 applied to all Cossacks living both within the Russian Tsardom and outside it (but periodically contracted to serve Russian sovereigns)," but the data on which this conclusion is based remains unknown. V.E. Zelinsky, a candidate of legal sciences, also refers to free Cossacks as an "estate" as early as the mid-16th century, although he himself acknowledges that Cossack communities "were formed from individuals who had fallen outside the class-estate culture." It is also unclear why, despite being well aware of the specifics of the relationship between the Muscovite state and the free Cossacks, some prominent historians—A.P. Pronshtein and others—considered it possible to refer to the free Cossacks of the 17th century as an "estate" ("special estate"), without offering any new (different from the above) definitions of this concept.

E.I. Dulimov's position is also difficult for readers to grasp. In his book "The Slavs of the Medieval Don," co-authored with V.K. Tsechoev, he states that the Cossacks as a social class emerged as early as the mid-16th century, first emerging "as a military class independent of the tsar" during the capture of Kazan. And in the abstract of E.I. Dulimov's doctoral dissertation, he writes that during the 16th to the first half of the 17th centuries, "the Cossacks were not a classical feudal class, but were effectively a territorial entity, as they retained the qualities of an independent subethnos."

A special (albeit small) group of researchers asks the question: "Are the Cossacks a class or an ethnic group?" This question is sometimes formulated in the very titles of works devoted to the Cossacks and cannot help but cause confusion. After all, the former refers to social affiliation, while the latter refers to ethnicity, and comparing them is like comparing poods with arshins (as in: is the object heavy or long, red or round?).

Nevertheless, such a question is raised not only by amateurs from among the Cossack activists, but also by seemingly serious scientists, in particular, by Doctor of Technical and Historical Sciences V.V. Glushchenko. He supports his thesis about the "insufficiency of the 'class' concept in views on the essence of the Cossacks" (repeating almost verbatim the arguments of the Cossack radicals) with a number of seemingly rhetorical questions such as: "Where and when did the classes wage independent wars, making land and sea campaigns?"; "Which class has its own folk clothing, its own special songs and dances, its own special style of construction...?", as well as the fact that the Cossacks could move to other classes (becoming nobles, merchants, priests) and at the same time not break "spiritual ties with their ancestors". The same question is raised by Doctor of Historical Sciences S.A. Golovanova, and as a result of lengthy reasoning comes to the conclusion that "the Cossacks more closely correspond to the definition of an *ethnikos*" (admitting, however, that this concept "has

never been established in ethnology").

A.I. Agafonov also has a contradictory position on this issue. On the one hand, he believes that "at the end of the 16th – first half of the 17th century, the government, seeking to subjugate the Cossacks, recognized them as a special service class, which was outside the state and administrative control, outside the sphere of feudal subordination and exploitation," and on the other hand, according to A.I. Agafonov, "it is hardly possible to say that in the 16th–17th centuries, the Cossacks of Russia possessed a combination of all class characteristics or many of them..."

A.I. Agafonov's interpretation of the positions of the "majority of Soviet scholars" also requires clarification. According to his version, based on K. Marx's definition (in the synopsis of N.I. Kostomarov's book on Razin), the Cossacks "were recognized by the government at the beginning of the 17th century as a special service class on a par with the strelets, gunners, and collars." Most likely, in this case we are dealing with the practice, widespread in our literature, of uniting under the name "Cossacks" two social groups that differed greatly in their status in the 16th-17th centuries: the city Cossacks, who served in many garrisons "according to the strelets order" (and belonged, like the strelets and gunners, to the service apparatus), and the free Cossacks - Don, Volga, Yaitsk, Terek. Thus, the Tver historian O.G. Usenko directly writes that the Don Cossacks of the 17th century "They were considered 'service people by appointment.'" In fact, I. Yu. Erokhin does not distinguish between free and service (urban) Cossacks.

Our public, as a rule, knows very little about the city Cossacks. Even separating them from the free Cossacks, researchers do not always understand the specifics of the position of this category of service people (for example, I.L. Konevichenko believes that they "belonged to the regiments of the new system"). However, more often we have to deal with the transfer of ideas about the free Cossacks, which are better known in wider circles, to the city Cossacks. The difference between the "service" and "free" Cossacks is not always understood by writers and historians, but was perfectly understood by contemporaries. According to O. Yu. Kuts, the very expression "free Cossacks", which appeared at the end of the 16th century, "arose primarily to distinguish them from service, city Cossacks." S.K. Sagnaeva believes that "the process of the formation of the Cossacks as an estate, which began in the late 17th - early 18th centuries in the Don, Yaik, Terek troops, was completed only in the 19th century, which was reflected in the relevant documents." One can fully agree with her on this issue, but only partially with O. Yu. Kuts. His interesting, very informative and repeatedly cited monograph states that in the 17th century, "the Don Cossacks - albeit formally -

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belonged to Russian society", and disputes the opinion of N. A. Mininkov, who, proving the Cossacks' location outside state jurisdiction, referred to the above-cited phrase of G. Kotoshikhin about the Cossacks' immunity from the Moscow authorities. As O. Yu. Kuts rightly believes, "this phrase cannot be understood literally. It probably refers only to conflicts within Cossack detachments. In cases where the matter concerned a crime not within a Cossack group, but on the side, the guilty Cossacks fell under the norms in force within the country." This assertion is convincingly supported by specific examples of punishments for free Cossacks who served in the Moscow army for robberies and murders of civilians, and the general conclusion of the researcher is as follows: "The "Free Don Cossacks" were to some extent (however, a special and unique) social group of Russian society with its own important distinctive features - the right to live outside the borders of the state, the right to its own internal governance and court, as well as ... the right to external relations and independent conduct of military operations, in addition, the "right" to accept fugitives ... True, the clear political and social framework of the Don Cossacks in the 17th century had not yet been established and changed in connection with the course of Moscow-Don relations, until this process was completed in the 18th century ... On the whole, apparently, the situation in the 17th century of the Terek-Greben and Yaitsk Cossack communities was similar."

I believe that the "distinctive features" of the Cossacks' position noted by O.Yu. Kuts can be explained much more simply - by the vassal nature of the "Moscow-Don relations", where the suzerain, naturally, is the Moscow state, and the vassal is the Don Host (as well as the Yaik or Terek Host). The suzerain does not interfere in the internal affairs of the vassal, but has the right to severely punish him for the harm caused to him.

This idea is not new. It was expressed by S.I. Thorzhovsky in 1923. "The Don Host should be considered a vassal state under the suzerainty of Moscow," he wrote. "Such relations arise when two states of different cultures clash, and the stronger leaves the internal structure of the weaker intact and limits itself to subordinating its external relations, strengthening its political power by receiving tribute or military assistance from it... The Don Host, in its economic development, stood below Muscovite Rus' and, naturally, could provide it with assistance not through tribute (on the contrary, it itself received "salaries"), but primarily through its military actions, just as the Zaporozhian Host did in relation to Poland and the Crimean Horde did in relation to Turkey. The Don Host was a unique state-army, obliged to serve the Muscovite state in military matters and, in part, in foreign policy, but was completely independent in internal affairs." Everything here is correct, except, of

course, for the comparison of the Don Host to a state, which we have already discussed above...

The opinion about the vassal nature of the Don's dependence on Moscow in the 17th century is also quite widely presented in modern literature. In particular, it was expressed by N.A. Mininkov, who believed that after 1671 these relations already took on the character of allegiance, and the authors of the collective work "Cossack Don: Essays on History", who believe that in 1671-1721 "the development of relations between Russia and the Don ... can be characterized as a state of colonial autonomy", when "the Don Host actually becomes part of the Russian state, but for now retains its republican structure and governance with certain legal restrictions ...".

E. I. Dulimov does not agree with the concept of "vassalage" as applied to the relations between Moscow and the Don. In his opinion, this concept "is more in line with European realities, and in the conditions of Russia and the Don, an early confederative union of a leading senior and a subordinate junior partner de facto developed: the great Moscow kingdom and the peripheral Cossack statehood." It fell apart in 1671 - after the defeat of the Razin uprising and the forced oath of allegiance of the Cossacks to the "great sovereign."

If we adhere to traditional ideas about the confederation as a union of sovereign states, then it is difficult to agree with this position: even from the above-mentioned works of E. I. Dulimov himself, it follows that the Don Army was never a full-fledged state, and even more so, a sovereign state.

I believe that when approaching this issue, it is necessary to consider the formal and real aspects of Muscovite-Don relations. These are usually clearly discernible, but not always understood by everyone. Thus, V.V. Glushchenko is certain that "the Cossacks did not consider themselves subjects of the tsar," however, their relationship to Russian authority was more complex. In their correspondence with Moscow, they, like all service personnel of the 16th and 17th centuries (from boyars and voivodes to strelets and gunners), referred to themselves as "slaves of the great sovereign" (sometimes even as "centuries-old" or "natural slaves"), and the territory on which they lived was called the "sovereign's patrimony." But at the same time, the Cossacks, as already noted, considered their service to the "sovereign" to be purely voluntary; they could kill the tsar's envoy if he came to them with what they considered "inappropriate" proposals or demands; they openly threatened Moscow to "leave its river in vain" if they were not sent their salary, etc., which demonstrates the largely formal nature of their "service" status.

General assessments of government policy toward the free Cossacks in modern historiography are mixed. The most widely accepted viewpoint to date is presented in N.A. Mininkov's seminal monograph, "The Don Cossacks in the Late Middle Ages."

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Regarding the significance of "royal vacations" for the Don, the author writes that the "sovereign's salary" helped the Cossacks survive when they were unable to undertake campaigns "for zipuns." He views this salary not only as payment for carrying out specific assignments from Moscow and a form of economic and political support for the Cossacks, but also as a means of curbing the Cossacks' predatory lifestyle.

A.I. Agafonov, in his review of N.A. Mininkov's monograph, develops this idea and considers it necessary to take into account another role of "vacations": "Thanks to the tsar's salary, the government formed among the Cossacks the idea of a dependent, service-like nature of the relationship between the Muscovite state and the Don army, which from the beginning of the 18th century were perceived as natural and "from ancient times" having existed."

It must be acknowledged that, despite all the complications in the relationship between Moscow and the Free Cossacks in the 17th and early 18th centuries, which sometimes reached extremely acute levels, the government's policy of integrating them into the class structure of Russian society was crowned with complete success. As M.A. Ryblova notes, the "metropolis" and Cossack communities began to constitute a single system, and it is no coincidence that the "idea of serving the homeland" became "key to Cossack folklore." V.V. Trepavlov points out that "the proud, self-loving Don Cossacks viewed Rus' differently than their other neighbors—Turkey, Crimea, or the Nogai Horde. They viewed their actions to prevent Tatar raids on the southern Russian borderland as a shield against the 'infidels,' maintaining 'God's path.'"

The position of the Ukrainian Cossacks was more complicated. They had been The Cossacks of the 17th century sometimes served the Russian Tsar, and many of them settled on the territory of the Moscow State as "service Cherkassians", but before the uprising of B. Khmel'nitsky in 1648, the Zaporizhian Host was actually a vassal of the Polish Crown and took an active part on its side in all Russian-Polish wars. In addition, the Ukrainian Cossacks then often independently raided Russian lands, robbed trade caravans traveling to and from the Don. When attacking Rus', the Zaporizhian Cossacks often united with the Crimean Tatars, and to counter the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, they repeatedly entered into official alliances with them. Nevertheless, even before the reunification of Ukraine with Russia, as B.N. emphasizes, Florya, in the Cossack-Tatar relations, the confrontational side prevailed: "This was a spontaneous, but precisely for this reason especially strong antagonism of two forces, each of which sought to establish itself in the same territories of the Wild Field," and "the severity of the antagonism was facilitated by the conviction of the Cossacks, widely reflected in the sources of the late 16th - first half of the 17th century, that by

attacking the Tatars and repelling their attacks, they were performing the important task of protecting the Christian world from the 'infidels'."

But there are other points of view in modern literature regarding the relations of the free Cossacks with the Turkish-Tatar world. Thus, the Krasnodar historian D.V. Sen has repeatedly expressed the view that in the 17th - early 18th centuries, the Cossacks of all "troops", by and large, did not care whom to serve, because they professed the principle "we serve the tsar under whom we live." He believes that the Cossacks' attachment to Moscow as a spiritual center was weak, and expresses the opinion that both the Russian tsar and the Turkish sultan were of "equal status" in their eyes. Moreover, as D.V. Sen believes, after the church schism, the free Cossacks became generally disillusioned with the Moscow state, and the status of the Crimean Khanate and the Ottoman Empire became even more preferable in the mass consciousness of the Cossacks.

Such a radical revision of the established historiographic views on the attitude of free Cossacks to Moscow did not find support among D.V. Sen's colleagues. Krasnodar historians I.Yu. Vasiliev and A.I. Zudin subjected his concept to well-founded criticism, noting the lack of evidence for its main provisions. In their opinion, "many of the conclusions in D.V. Sen's monograph appear unconvincing and have a clearly expressed political bias."

Some ideologists of the Cossack revival in their negative assessments of the nature of the relationship between the free Cossacks and the Russian state go even further, seeing only negative consequences for the Cossacks in cooperation with the Russian government. It is claimed, for example, that Russia took away the sea from the Don Host, which it had been accustomed to owning for "hundreds of years", as well as the best lands, and turned its territory into its colony. In this, they are also not original, repeating (often word for word) the judgments of their ideological predecessors of the early twentieth century. But these assessments pale in comparison with the characteristics given to the Russian state by modern continuers of the cause of the "Cossacks" and "Cossacks".

Thus, one of the prominent activists of the Cossack revival, V. F. Nikitin, portrays the Cossacks as one of the innocent victims of the aggressive policy pursued by the "dodgy and deceitful Moscow" since the time of Ivan the Terrible, when the Don Cossacks represented an "independent state entity." It was then, V. F. Nikitin emphasizes, that "the completely ruined and enslaved illiterate Moscow proceeded to conquer neighboring peoples and regions." And V. F. Nikitin sees the true tragedy of the Cossacks in the fact that "Russia widely used the military art of the Cossacks, their military forces in the conquest of various peoples to keep them in the empire, but at the same time enslaved the Cossacks themselves in every possible

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way."

"The more we ponder the essence of the problem of 'gathering the Russian land,'" writes V.F. Nikitin, "the more we are overcome with horror at the sight of the methods used by rulers and their minions over many centuries to build a 'united and indivisible' Russia." After such words, one should not be surprised either that their author presents Stepan Razin as a "defender of Cossack liberties" and "the leader of a broad ideological movement that arose among the Cossacks and whose main goal was the struggle for the human personality, and, above all, for the human dignity of the Cossacks," or that Hetman Mazepa, in V.F. Nikitin's understanding, is not a traitor at all, but a fighter for the independence of the Cossacks. What is surprising is something else: why is V.F. Nikitin not "overwhelmed with horror" when it comes to the methods the Cossacks used to deal with their enemies? Indeed, from the standpoint of modern morality and ethics, Cossack cruelty in the 16th and 17th centuries defies rational explanation, as it was often simply monstrous—just recall the Razin executions or the barbaric reprisals of the Zaporozhian Cossacks against the Jews under Bohdan Khmelnytsky. The Cossacks also treated civilians with extreme cruelty during their "zipun" campaigns to the Crimean and Turkish shores. And wasn't order maintained within Cossack communities through brutal executions ("in a sack and into the water," etc.)? These facts are reflected in quite representative sources and have long been part of our historiography. How can a serious researcher be unaware of them or fail to understand that every era has its own morality, its own ethics?

V. F. Nikitin, indeed, does not know much and does not understand even more. Otherwise, it is difficult to explain his opposition of the "Cossack republics" to the Muscovite state on the grounds that if in Moscow there were "slave owners and slaves", then the Cossacks had "civil political equality" and they "did not know slavery". And he is not original in this assertion. The "Cossack" emigrants were also sure that their ancestors "never knew slavery" and "never oppressed anyone". And this despite the fact that by that time the widespread slave trade among the Cossacks was well known: the numerous "yasyr" captured by them during the campaigns for "zipuns" was considered the most valuable booty and the most popular commodity in the Don Host of the 17th century. The scale of the slave trade on the Don can be judged by the number of "yasyrs" that the Cossacks brought back from their raids on the Crimean and Turkish shores in the 17th century: 150 people in 1650, up to 600 people in 1653, 400 in 1655, 600 in 1657, and 2,000 people in 1659. And weren't "yasyrs" (slaves) kept by the "homely" Cossacks for all kinds of "work" on their farms? Didn't "yasyrki" (slave girls) often become Cossack concubines or wives?

Not only "infidels" but sometimes also Orthodox and Russian people ended up in slavery to the

Cossacks. The widespread use of this phenomenon on the Don is recognized even by those activists of the Cossack revival who, despite their tendency to idealize their ancestors, are apparently better informed than V.F. Nikitin and his associates. We will agree on this issue with A.G. Shkvarov, who admits that "the Cossacks of the Middle Ages (the free people themselves) are slave traders..."

The authors of the passages that contrast "Moscow" and the free Cossacks in every way do not want to see the obvious – the mutual benefit of "Russian-Cossack" relations, and this has long been a firmly established fact. "Economic ties between the free outskirts and Russian cities were constant and strong," wrote R.G. Skrynnikov in 1985. "The Cossacks could not exist without the supply of bread, weapons and gunpowder from Russia." And it should be noted that these supplies were constantly growing. If, for example, in 1623, money was sent to the Don - 1000 rubles, cloth - 20 supplies, grain reserves - 150 quarters of rusk, 25 quarters of cereals and 25 quarters of oatmeal, wine - 25 buckets, ammunition - 20 poods of gunpowder, lead, saltpeter and sulfur, then the following year this "salary" was doubled, and in 1646 it already had the following amounts: money - 5000 rubles, cloth - 100 supplies, grain reserves - 2575.5 quarters of rye flour, 249.5 quarters of rusk and 87.5 quarters of oatmeal, wine - 300 buckets, gunpowder - 300 poods, lead - 200 poods, "and for sails" 10,000 arshins. canvas, "and for crafts" 500 poods of iron, 500 poods of resin, 200 poods of "caulking".

It should also be taken into account that Russia had to not only help the Cossacks with weapons, ammunition and food, but also directly save them from physical destruction.

After the unauthorized (without Moscow's sanction) capture of the Turkish fortress of Azov by the Cossacks (in 1637) and the famous "Azov siege" (which, as O. Yu. Kuts convincingly showed, would not have been successful for the Cossacks without the material and moral support of Moscow), the Don Host was bled white, its numbers decreased from 10 (on the eve of the "siege") to 5 (and according to some sources) to 4 thousand people. A particularly strong blow was dealt to the Don Cossacks in 1643, when the Turkish-Tatar army, avenging the Azov disgrace, routed their main forces on Monastery Island. The cream of the Don Cossacks perished there, about 2 thousand women and children were captured, and enemy raids on Don villages continued. As the Cossacks reported to Moscow in April 1644, they "have become completely depleted of people on the Don in... the Muslim... parishes, and in sieges, and in many large battles, our people have been completely wiped out, and we, a small people, without your sovereign help, without military men, will not be able to stand against their large Muslim parishes... and will ultimately perish."

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Although the Moscow government refused to include Azov into the Russian state, it provided the Cossacks with great assistance. The ideologists of Cossack "separatism" try to downplay this assistance in every possible way, calling it "insignificant", and more often than not do not remember it at all and only angrily condemn the "lying", "cowardly" Moscow for its "short-sightedness" and "cowardice". However, here too they are at odds with firmly established facts. In 1646-1648, when the Don Cossacks, by their own admission, "became unbearable to live" due to the increased pressure from the Turks and Tatars and a real threat arose of the Turks capturing the entire Lower Don, military detachments (a total of about 10 thousand people) were sent there, specially formed for the "Don service" in the southern Russian districts, armed and equipped at the expense of the "sovereign treasury". Almost all restrictions and obstacles for residents of the southern Russian districts who wanted to go to the Don were lifted. These unprecedented steps clearly showed how interested the Moscow government was in preserving the free Cossacks on the Don.

Not only amateurs but sometimes even serious historians express the opinion that the attempt to artificially increase the Don Cossacks' numbers failed. I can't entirely agree with this. Of the 10,000 men sent to the Don, only about 2,000 remained, which, given the 4,000-5,000 Cossacks who survived the Azov War, was quite a significant number. Moreover, these were the fighters best adapted to the Cossack way of life, having endured extremely severe trials (it is no coincidence that one of these "eager men," Mikhail Samarin, later became a military ataman).

The notion held by some historians about the incredible power of Cossack communities is also far removed from historical reality. For example, V.V. Glushchenko believed that in the 16th and first half of the 17th centuries, the Cossacks were even stronger than the Muscovite state. But this is simply a misunderstanding: in terms of military and economic potential, even weakened by the "Time of Troubles," Rus' was many times superior to all the Cossack "armies" combined. Equally untrue is the same author's assertion that "in all cases, it was not the Cossacks who moved toward the state, but the state toward the Cossacks." The desire to "serve the great sovereign" was the most common and noticeable phenomenon in the history of the relationship between the free Cossacks and the Russian state, and the refusal of Cossack services sometimes even led to acute social conflicts: it is enough to recall the circumstances of Vasily Us's famous campaign from the Don to Moscow "for service" in 1666. I.O. Kudryakov, who noted that "at decisive moments in history, the Don Cossacks always moved towards integration with the Russian state."

Asking the question of "what drew the Cossacks themselves to the Muscovite state, whose internal

structure they were dissatisfied with and whose foreign policy goals they did not always share," S.M. Markedonov offers the following explanation: "The constant steppe war with the Tatar and other nomadic hordes, and the confrontation with the powerful Ottoman Empire, inspired in the Cossacks... an insatiable thirst for political stability. Over time, some Cossacks came to view Moscow's patronage as the lesser evil compared to constant military conflicts. The lopsided economic development of the Don... the dependence of the region's prosperity on the success of yet another 'campaign for zipuns' also dictated the need for external assistance. Thus, friends-enemies, the Cossacks and the state, were doomed to close cooperation..."

This explanation is certainly correct, but not exhaustive. To it, at a minimum, must be added the presence of kinship among many Cossacks "in Rus'," as well as the close trade ties between the Cossack regions and the "metropolis," and the shared language and faith of the vast majority of its population—something we have already discussed above. Furthermore, when characterizing the relationship between the free Cossacks and the Muscovite state, it is impossible not to note that "in Rus'" there were several monasteries where sick, wounded, and disabled Cossacks found refuge. Impoverished families of fallen Cossacks also often returned "to Rus'," while able-bodied Cossacks also went on pilgrimages (on important church holidays or to pay homage to holy miracle workers). Some of them, during the "years of famine," during the "plagues" and other disasters, generally left the Don or Yaik and found work in the garrisons of the outlying "Russian" cities for the "sovereign service," and the nobles who "became Cossacks," after "having a good time" "in the Field," could very well return back to their former rank and even receive a new estate from the "sovereign."

Historians have recently frequently written about the Russian state's "destructive" policies for the Cossacks' fate, even in relation to the Caucasus region. For example, S.A. Kozlov's monograph "The Caucasus in the Fates of the Cossacks" (published in two editions) relies heavily on the idea that Russia drew the Terek and Greben Cossacks into endless clashes with the highlanders. According to this historian, until the 18th century, relations between the Cossacks and highlanders were "based on the principles of good neighborliness, cooperation, and mutual benefit." Even if conflicts over cattle rustling and the capture of captives did arise, they were resolved by "centuries-old traditions of dispute resolution," which Russia violated.

This "demonization" of Russian policy in the Caucasus is poorly consistent with well-known facts. For example, military memos have survived, in which Terek Cossacks appeal to Moscow for assistance in response to the ever-increasing raids on their towns by

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North Caucasian rulers and Turkey's increasing activities in the region. This is also supported by numerous materials cited in A.S. Kozlov's monograph itself. It appears that its author fails to always consider the objective regularity and historical determinacy of the events that unfolded in the North Caucasus and the realities of the era as a whole, thereby departing from the principles of historicism. Even relying solely on the facts presented in S.A. Kozlov's book, one can see that the war between the Cossacks and the highlanders, despite all sorts of "kunachestvo" and "atalychstvo," continued, sometimes ebb and flow, practically from the 16th century, just as the war between the highlanders themselves did. And those "friendly relations" between the Cossacks and the North Caucasian peoples, which historians had previously written about so often, were, of course, not only not constant, but, by and large, did not go beyond the relations between the mountain tribes themselves, with the alternation of war and peace, alliances with some groups against others, and so on, typical of the era of military democracy.

These relations could only maintain their "patriarchal" character (with "centuries-old traditions of dispute resolution") for a limited time—until the North Caucasus became an arena of rivalry between neighboring powers and until the North Caucasian peoples themselves had sufficiently advanced in the process of forming their own (early feudal) states. This, as elsewhere, was accompanied by increased military activity and expansion into neighboring lands, including Cossack ones. In the 18th century, we clearly observe both. In this situation, the Terek Cossacks had two options: either side with Russia or with its enemies.

The latter path, as is well known, was taken by the so-called Nekrasovites—a large group of Don Cossacks (approximately two thousand families), led by Ataman Ignat Nekrasov. After the defeat of the Bulavin Rebellion in 1708, they fled to the Kuban region, which was under Ottoman control. The Nekrasovites' numbers subsequently increased with new fugitives, and they all became pliable tools in the hands of Turkey and Crimea. The Turks and Tatars did not interfere in the internal affairs of the Nekrasov community, but they brutally suppressed attempts by the Cossacks to leave in response to repeated offers from the Russian authorities to seek forgiveness and return to their former homes. Together with the Kuban Tatars, the Nekrasovites carried out devastating raids on the lands of Saratov, Tsaritsyn, Penza, Simbirsk, Nizhny Novgorod, and Voronezh, as well as on the territory of the Don Host. These actions were accompanied by the burning of villages, mass murder of civilians or their abduction and sale into slavery, and in their native Don the Nekrasovites committed no less atrocities than in other territories.

Soviet historiography was characterized by an idealization of the Nekrasovites. They were portrayed

as implacable fighters against the autocracy, their raids on Russian lands were viewed as manifestations of "class struggle," and the only victims mentioned were landowners and "homely" Cossacks. This approach contradicted both basic logic (the Turkish autocracy was hardly superior to the Russian one) and the concrete historical material, long since introduced into scholarly circulation and recently once again accessible to the general reader.

After Ignat Nekrasov's death in 1737, the activity of his followers diminished, but the Nekrasovites' overt (military) and covert (espionage) actions against Russia continued until the very end of the 18th century—until Turkey lost the Northern Caucasus. The fate of these traitors was tragic. Many small children and women perished during the evacuation from Kuban. Some of the Nekrasovites fled to the mountains and subsequently disappeared among the "Circassians," while the majority, having migrated to the Turks, continued to serve the Sultan directly as part of his troops.

Contrary to the opinion of D. V. Sen, who tended to idealize the position of the Nekrasovites in a foreign land, Turkey did not become either a "promised land" or a home for them. I. Yu. Vasiliev and A. I. Zudin drew attention to the fact that in the well-studied folklore of the Nekrasovites, there is "not a single example of a positive image of a Muslim state, its ruler, or its people." Over time, the closed Old Believer communities of the Nekrasovites found it increasingly difficult to fit into the realities of their new life in a foreign land, and the number of "Ignat-Cossacks" steadily decreased. Epidemics, everyday hardships, the aggravation of interethnic and interfaith relations, the openly assimilatory policy of the Turkish authorities after the revolution of 1918–1923—all this eventually forced the Nekrasovites to leave Turkey. Most returned to Russia. This "exodus" began in the first decades of the 19th century and ended largely in the early 1960s. Many Nekrasovites left for America and dispersed throughout the world.

As for the circumstances that prompted I. Nekrasov to leave with his army to Kuban, they require not only a detailed, but, above all, an objective analysis, which even professional historians, sometimes overwhelmed by quite understandable emotions, are not always capable of.

Bulavin's rebellion was preceded by a long period of mass exodus of the population (mainly peasants) to the Don from the "native" regions of the country, which has already been discussed above. People went "to the Cossacks" in groups of 100, 200, 300, 500 or more people, with wives and children, rising up in entire villages and towns. As a result, many of the districts neighboring the Don Host "became deserted", and the population of the "upper" Cossack "towns" increased by 10–20 times. In addition, many new "towns" were built in the upper reaches of the Don, along the Khopra, Medveditsa,

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Ilovlya, Buzuluk and Seversky Donets. With the beginning of the war for the Baltic and in the course of Peter the Great's reforms, which required more and more soldiers, workers and taxpayers, the mass outflow of "manpower" became completely unacceptable for the Russian government. The question of the liquidation of the ancient Cossack right not to extradite fugitives and of further narrowing the Cossack autonomy was a foregone conclusion, especially since after Russia's position in the South had strengthened by that time, the government had more opportunities to pursue a tougher policy towards the Cossacks. In 1707, a royal decree followed on the expulsion from the Don and the return to their former places of residence of all those who had settled with the Cossacks after 1695. The expedition to the Don by Yu. Dolgoruky with the aim of searching for fugitives and the subsequent suppression of the Bulavin rebellion were carried out with excessive cruelty, leading to enormous, albeit exaggerated in some works, but completely unjustified from any point of view victims. However, it is wrong to consider the punitive action of the Russian authorities as a "real pogrom," a "genocide" of the Cossacks, or the first "decossackization" in our history, and to draw analogies with the "decossackization" of the 1919–1920s, as some historians, writers, and publicists do.

The government of Peter I did not set as its goal either the physical destruction of the Don Cossacks or the liquidation of their service status as the "Don Army", as prescribed by some directives of the Bolshevik government of 1919–1920.

This is acknowledged even by some activists of the Cossack revival, who are generally inclined to sharply condemn the tsarist policy towards the Cossacks. As N.I. Nesterov writes, "the relations between the central government and the Don Cossacks under all rulers were never rosy, rather, on the contrary, they were quite complicated, and sometimes tragic. But not a single tsar, not a single emperor set the task of destroying it. On the contrary, they clearly recognized its strength and usefulness, moreover, the need for it to serve the central government." B.A. Almazov is also sure that "the empire never set itself the task of destroying the Cossacks, as it did after 1917, but it brought the Cossacks to imperial uniformity, to discipline in the European manner," and considers such a turn of events historically inevitable.

The actions of the Russian authorities in the Don region in 1707–1709 were dictated by purely pragmatic considerations and were historically conditioned. It is difficult to imagine the progressive development of our country in the 18th century without the strengthening of the state's role in its affairs. However, by the 18th century, the state could no longer tolerate the massive loss of life due to flight to Cossack territories, the interference with its diplomacy caused by the unauthorized actions of Cossacks on the southern borders, or the very

existence within its territory of communities living by plundering the inhabitants of neighboring states. Moreover, due to new historical realities, the Cossacks themselves could no longer count on "feeding on a zipun," and after the suppression of the Bulavin Rebellion, they finally took up the plow in earnest. Cossack autonomy was, of course, greatly curtailed from then on, as were the rights of the Host Circle, which soon became a purely decorative body, its name serving only as a reminder to the Cossacks of their lost right to elect their own atamans. However, at the grassroots level (in stanitsas and farmsteads), Cossack self-government persisted until the early 20th century. The social structure of the Cossacks generally evolved in this direction, thus demonstrating the objective process of class formation. Beginning in the mid-17th century, the Cossack elders acquired increasing authority and weight within the "host" and increasingly more rights, at the expense of the Circle's prerogatives. However, according to S.M. Markedonov, "while the elders' usurpation of the Circle's power was evolutionary in nature, Peter the Great's measures were a revolutionary upheaval for the Cossacks..."

"The era of Peter the Great was a turning point in the history of Russia, the "free" Cossack communities, and the Cossacks as a whole," writes A.G. Shkvarov. "The country emerged renewed, with a completely different face... For some Cossacks, the era of Peter the Great marked the end of their history; for others, it breathed new life into them, transforming them into a new, distinct, ruling class. This was the fundamental compromise in the struggle between opposites—Will and Autocracy, or the State." And "joining Great Russia," A.G. Shkvarov is convinced, was the only possible and correct path for the Cossacks.

Researchers come to similar conclusions when studying the historical destinies of individual Cossack "Arms", including the Terek Cossack Army, which found itself in the most difficult conditions.

Nevertheless, the theme of "Cossack genocide" remains very popular among modern Cossacks. Some activists take it to the extreme, claiming that this genocide was "repeated," including the suppression of the rebellions of not only Bulavin but also Razin and Pugachev, and even likening it to the extermination of Native Americans, Armenians in Turkey, and the Holocaust. Others, while depicting the hardships befalling the Cossacks at the hands of the Russian state in the 18th century, reject the definition of Cossacks as a privileged (or even semi-privileged) class and assert that, although the Cossacks shed blood for Russia, they lived within it. "Worse than serfs." Supporters of such views seem to have a very vague understanding of the status of serfs in Russia (which by the 18th century was already little different from slavery) and, furthermore, are apparently convinced that no one except the Cossacks ever shed blood for

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the Fatherland—not the nobility, and certainly not the peasants called up for military service... The words of General A.S. Lukomsky, chairman of the Special Council under A.I. Denikin, are more consistent with historical reality: "The Cossacks' service was difficult, but they enjoyed economic prosperity and benefits that no other part of the Russian population had ever known."

The subjugation of the free Cossacks to the Russian state undoubtedly occurred with numerous "costs" and "excesses" (as is almost always the case in Russia); many of these could have been avoided with a more thoughtful, more flexible policy on the part of the central government. But this was an absolutely inevitable and even necessary process for the further development of both the state and the Cossacks themselves.

Russia's great power status was an indispensable condition for the country's survival: this is the view held today not only by Russian historians but also by some foreign ones. However, it came at a high cost to the entire Russian people, not just the Cossacks. The tragic events that occurred during the abolition of Cossack liberties certainly require further and, most importantly, impartial research. In a detailed review of a work that is far from an objective analysis of these events, the renowned Cossack historian A.V. Venkov noted: "The tragic pages of Cossack history must be studied and remembered. And if these tragic pages are to be written about, they must be done with great tact, not turning the research into a testing ground for anti-Russian mockery."

While certainly agreeing with this observation, I would also like to once again focus attention on the question of the price of historical progress, a question that has been repeatedly raised in our historiography, the age-old problem of the relationship between general and particular interests, which has long been raised in Russian literature. Even V.G. Belinsky called for recognition of "the triumph of the general over the particular, without abandoning our sympathy for the suffering of this particular." And in connection with the fate of the Cossacks, the same idea was repeated in 1928 by the White émigré GeS.A. Shchepikhin: "The logic of history is inexorable, and it forces us to sacrifice the individual for the sake of the whole."

The elimination of Cossack liberties (as well as Cossack self-will) was bound to occur sooner or later, regardless of whose patronage—Russia or neighboring countries—the Cossack territories ultimately found themselves under. Becoming a privileged class in a powerful state was by no means the worst possible evolution for Cossack communities, and it inevitably followed in the 18th century. From then on, Cossacks took the broadest and most active part in all of Russia's wars, and it's impossible not to note that it was precisely the

imperial period of its history that contains the most vivid pages in the annals of Cossack military history. Materials for a prosopography of the free Cossacks of the Don, Donets, Volga, Yaik, and Terek:

This chapter is written as part of a broader prosopographical study of the Russian Cossacks during the period of Russia's emergence from the Time of Troubles in the early 17th century, when documentary sources on their history were still quite limited. The study aims to introduce new data on the early history of the Don, Donets, Volga, Yaik, and Terek Cossacks into scholarly circulation, based on thematic registration of the Treasury's account books up to the Great Moscow Fire of May 1626. For this period, data from this understudied type of documentary source is particularly valuable and, in some cases, unique.

At the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries, Cossack communities emerged along the great Eastern European rivers—the Volga, Don, Seversky Donets, Yaik, and Terek—located in the "gray zone" of Dasht-i-Kipchak. These communities recognized the supreme authority of the sovereign of "all Russia," but not the laws of the Russian state. By the end of the 16th century, the earliest and largest of the Russian communities in Dasht-i-Kipchak, the Don Cossacks, united into the "Voisk" (Army), which was recognized in official documents of the Russian state from 1614. The unification of the relatively disparate groups of Cossacks living on the Don into a single socio-political and cultural corporation within the framework of the Russian people and the Orthodox Church, but not the Russian state, testified to the already established corporate consciousness of Cossack associations in general, and of the Don Cossacks in particular. The unification of the Cossack communities that filled the Russian land into hosts occurred repeatedly during the dramatic events of the Time of Troubles, as a "host" was the name given to a union of several Cossack villages, each electing military ranks—ataman and esaul, and possibly other general military ranks such as clerk. However, these associations were not permanent and disintegrated after the campaign's conclusion (and sometimes even earlier). The processes of Don Cossack integration transformed ad hoc military units, designed for survival and raiding, into Hosts, now permanent corporate entities. All of them attempted to independently navigate complex and ambiguous relationships with the Russian state. The first civil war in Russian history, in the early 17th century, was of enormous significance for the institutionalization of the Cossacks, although none of the free Cossack communities formally participated in it. After the "cleansing of Moscow" and the election of Mikhail Romanov as Tsar, the struggle against Ataman Ivan Zarutsky, who had "entrenched himself in Astrakhan," became one of the primary tasks of the Muscovite state, which was rising from the ashes. During this

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struggle, the government attempted to attract the Volga Cossacks to its side, calling them "the Host," which was a significant "advance" not only to the Volga Cossacks but also to the Yaik and Terek Cossacks. However, in conjunction with the "Zarutchiki" (Cossacks) who had arrived in Astrakhan with the Tushino boyar, the Volga Cossacks could have formed a sufficiently large Host, something the Russian government attempted (and quite successfully) to prevent. It was precisely the prosopographical study of this period in Cossack history that allowed us to draw well-founded conclusions about the incompleteness of the formation of the Volga Cossacks' military organization and to trace the similarities and differences in the formation of all the aforementioned free Cossack communities.

The main body of sources on this early period of Cossack history was introduced into scholarly circulation quite early and, for the most part, published. These fundamental publications for their time created the illusion, even among some professional historians, that it was no longer possible to find a significant set of new sources on the history of the pre-imperial Cossacks that had not been introduced into scholarly circulation. The subsequent development of Cossack historiography expanded the horizons of research, allowing A.L. Stanislavsky to reach the well-founded conclusion that the main body of written sources on the history of the free Cossacks of the first quarter of the 17th century had not yet been published (although the historian was, of course, referring to the period after 1613).

Conclusion

But these conclusions were not accompanied by the publication of new documentary complexes on the early history of the Cossacks. The consequence of this relatively weak source base for the origins and early history of the Russian Cossacks was the rapid growth of pseudo- and pseudo-historical mythology and various fantastical versions. Due to the paucity of sources on their origins and early history, the history of the Cossacks' origins is particularly burdened by a host of myths and fantastical versions, where flights of fancy and ideological bias often replace the historian's source-analysis work, even in seemingly formal scholarly publications. To this day, historical journalism and popular science literature, for example, continue to cite Novgorod ushkuiniks as the direct ancestors of either the Terek or Yaik Cossacks (or both), although it is sufficient to read the essays devoted to them by V.N. Bernadsky and L.V. Cherepnin to see the artificiality of such abstract concepts. Without attempting to refute the ever-growing mythology surrounding the origins and early history of the Russian Cossacks, we would be right in diagnosing one of the main causes of this "malignant tumor" on Cossack history as the acute shortage of new written sources, the primary and most reliable

foundation for scholarly analysis and reconstruction of the past. Expanding the source base for the topic of early Cossack history is the goal of this work.

We have endeavored to introduce new grains of factual information, extracted through a page-by-page review of several thousand handwritten sheets of the account books of the Treasury Court (from the mid-1620s, the Treasury Prikaz, hereinafter referred to as KD). Here, the reader is presented with the interim results of a major (and still far from complete) project to compile a prosopographical database of atamans, esauls, and stanitsas. At the same time, we sought to take the first steps toward creating a prosopographical database on the Russian Cossacks of the 16th-17th centuries and to demonstrate the potential of prosopographical research as a reliable alternative to the unrestrained flights of fancy of historical journalism, which have no relation to properly scientific knowledge. This is relevant for a wide variety of areas of historical knowledge, including the history of the Cossacks. It is noteworthy that I.E. Zabelin, who skimmed the cream from the basic corpus of our sources, included in his selection only two of the 71 records of the distribution of "soft goods" granted to the Don atamans and Cossacks that we identified and registered – for October 29, 1623 and March 18, 1624 (see below, Chronicle of Grants), and not a single one – for the Volga, Yaik and Terek Cossacks – out of 23 grants, respectively.

Of course, the expense books are more sparse and less informative than the Ambassadorial Prikaz documents published in A.A. Lishin's "Don Affairs" and "Acts," but the strengths and advantages of the expense books lie in their systematic integrity, owing to the insignificant losses of this documentary complex. We have already repeatedly covered the significance of the expense books for the history of the first years of Mikhail Fedorovich's reign as a whole, the nature, types, and styles of grants, and the significance of this body of sources for the history of military affairs, including the history of the Cossacks. This allows us to save space and time by referring to previous works.

The 86 entries in the Cossack department expense books for the period from August 1613 to March 1624, identifying the grants of fabrics to the Don, Donetsk, Volga, Yaik, and Terek Cossacks, contain the names of 46 atamans, 5 esauls, and up to 393 rank-and-file Cossacks. Systematization of the collected material clearly demonstrates the incompleteness of stratification, the vagueness, and the fluidity of Cossack corporations on the Don, and to an even greater extent, on the Volga, Yaik, and Terek in the first decades of the 17th century. The collected material is systematized in the form of a chronicle of grants to Don (and Donetsk) Cossacks on the Cossack department, and a short alphabetical list of the Don atamans, esauls, and Cossacks mentioned in the chronicle, with only the date of mention

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indicated. In exceptional cases, when a Cossack's status was crucial, or there was a fundamental difference in the spelling of his name, this was reflected in the alphabet. Thus, we were able to trace with a high degree of certainty the transformation of Martyn Pobezhimov from a Don Cossack in the village of Andrei Repchukov to the captain of the village of Gavril Starodubov, and Matvey Danilov and Nazar Ivanov from Cossacks to atamans.

We limited our sample to only those atamans and Cossacks who are at least once referred to in documents as Don, Donetsk, Volga, Yaik, and Terek, or who came from these rivers. Judging by the fact that they are not always referred to this way, the Cossacks may still have further to go. They are most likely to be identified among the free and service Cossacks as Don Cossacks. The sheer arbitrary nature of such a selection must be acknowledged, since as the Time of Troubles deepened and expanded in the Muscovite state, free Cossacks came to Rus' from the Don and Volga, and to a lesser extent from the Terek and Yaik. Those who, after the cessation of the Time of Troubles, did not become service Cossacks (referred to by historiography as "gorodovyi" or sometimes "pribornye") and did not flee to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth with the "designate Tsar Vladislav Zhigimontovich"—all of them, as well as the masses of the Rus' population who had shown themselves up—returned to the same rivers. The division of them at the beginning of the 17th century into Don, Volga, Yaik, and Terek was more than arbitrary, as can be seen from the biographical data of the atamans Ignatius Bedrishchev and Grigory Dolgovo (Dolgova Neck), cited below. After the Truce of Deulino, the government no longer tolerated the Cossack "feeding" on the Volga and refused to recognize the "Volga Host," henceforth defining the free Cossacks on the Volga solely as "thieves." Consequently, the Volga Cossacks were gradually forced to abandon the banks of the great Russian river and join the ranks of the Don, Yaik, and Terek Cossacks. It was probably at this time that significant strata of "Volga Cossacks" appeared in a number of southern—"Ukrainian" and "Polish"—Russian cities.

To trace the movements and service of the Don, Volga, Donetsk, Yaik, and Terek Cossacks, we also considered cases where documents explicitly mention "city" servicemen, yet they retained their previous status, such as that of Don Cossack. Such is the case with the Don Cossack captain Mikula Ivanov, who served in Novgorod-Seversky, which Russia lost during the Time of Troubles, but continued to serve with the Novgorod-Seversky Service Corporation. A record of the Don Cossack Ivan Miklyaev, who was granted the title "for complete patience," is also hinted at. He is also listed, according to his own words, as a "guard," i.e., serving on the outposts of the southern districts. Osip Pavlov served in Shatsk, and is listed at the Treasury Court as both a Don Cossack and a

"Shatchenin."

We also included Mikhail Bolotov and Aleksey Okhlyabinin, representatives of a small group of Donetsk Cossacks who served in Belgorod and ultimately shared the fate of the Volga Cossacks, either entering the sovereign's service or joining the ranks of the Don Host. Ataman Dmitry (Mitka) Sabykin, who was granted the title "for his leadership" and was recorded by the scribe as "of Udnetsk" (mistake?), likely also belonged to the Donetsk Cossacks.

So, what about the free Cossacks of the Time of Troubles, the majority of whom neither identified themselves as Don nor Volga, although some came to Rus' from these rivers? They are not considered in this paper, especially since doing so would greatly exceed the scope of this section. However, when identifying Don Cossacks who repeatedly received their KD pay, this problem arises with enviable regularity. Unfortunately, certain margins of error are indispensable here. For example, the question of Don Atman Ivan Moskvitin remains open: he received his KD pay twice, in August–September 1613, after which, from June 1617 to February 1618, without any mention of Don origin, his name appears five times among recipients of "soft goods." Are we dealing with the same individual, or is this a complete namesake? In such cases, the date of mention is entered under a question mark only in the alphabetical order next to the name and is not indicated in the chronicle. Another problem that inevitably confronts all reference book compilers is the identification of names, usually written not in full, but in diminutive forms, which are not always possible to determine unambiguously. Of course, identifying atamans is considerably simpler, but even here, not all of them are as renowned in historiography as Epifan Radilov and Smaga Chertensky—this problem primarily concerns ordinary Cossacks. However, even this situation sometimes clarifies a Cossack's full name and how it was abbreviated. For example, the name Pronka (Sozonov, November 1619) could be a shortened form of Prokop, Prokl, and Protasy. However, the repeated grants of Pronka Ivanov, a Don Cossack from the same village, in January and March 1624 reveal his full name as Prokofy and allow, with a high degree of probability, to extrapolate this reading to Pronka Sozonov. A similar double grant of a Cossack from the same village reveals to the researcher that Panka Ivanov's name is derived from the name Pavel. Among the Cossacks who received a salary, full namesakes are sometimes found who were members of the same village, which naturally raises the question: how did they themselves, and especially the Moscow clerks, avoid confusion when issuing their salaries? Alphabetical classification has suggested that in the cases described, when full namesakes with the same first and middle names lacked a personal or family nickname (surname), each was assigned a

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specific form of their name within their village. For example, in January 1619, in the village of Gavril Starodubov and Stepan Shchegolenok in Moscow, there were two Terentiy Fyodorovs, one of whom was twice recorded as Tereshka, and the other as Trenka. A cross-classification by chronology and alphabetical order also revealed that the Don Atamans Peter Vostraya Sable and Peter Vostraya Igla are one and the same. The second nickname appears to be earlier and may indicate the tailoring origins of an ancestor

of the renowned Ryazan noble family, the Vostraya Sablev. Having established a reputation among the Cossacks as a charismatic military leader, he was able to replace the second part of his nickname with a more prestigious form, more in keeping with his new status.

The format of this section does not allow us to close all the questions that the material collected here, although not able to resolve definitively, does allow us to pose and outline ways and options for their solution.

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